



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Report of the Triennial Review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee - Main JNCC Work Activities assessed against the three 'Government Tests'

June 2013



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Summary

1. The Triennial Review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee¹ concluded the functions JNCC carries out on behalf of Government are currently necessary and it is broadly the right body for delivering those functions. An important element of analysing the functions of the JNCC was to consider its main work activities against the three 'Government Tests'². Table 1 provides the results of this assessment for the JNCC's main activities.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/triennial-review-of-the-joint-nature-conservation-committee>

² The Cabinet Office "3 tests" are: is this a technical function (which needs external expertise to deliver); is this a function which needs to be, and seen to be, delivered with absolute political impartiality (such as certain regulatory or funding functions); or is this a function which needs to be delivered independently of Ministers to establish facts and/or figures with integrity.

Table 1: Main JNCC Work Activities assessed against the three ‘Government Tests’

| <p>JNCC Main Activities</p> | <p>Has the activity passed one of the Government’s “three tests” i.e. :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) is this a technical function (which needs external expertise to deliver); b) is this a function which needs to be, and seen to be, delivered with absolute political impartiality (such as certain regulatory or funding functions); c) is this a function which needs to be delivered independently of Ministers to establish facts and/or figures with integrity. |
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| <p>Provide advice, co-ordination and information to enable country and UK terrestrial and freshwater surveillance/monitoring to meet both country biodiversity strategy needs and UK reporting requirements cost-effectively.</p> | <p>Yes (a,b,c)</p> |

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| <p>Undertake, with partners, surveillance to detect spatial and temporal population change in selected bird, mammal and butterfly species, and range change in many other plant and invertebrate species. Where possible identify the likely causes of the trends. Periodically review and align schemes to fit country strategy and reporting requirements.</p> | <p>Yes (a,b,c)</p> |
| <p>Co-ordinate research and innovation that will help countries develop cost-effective approaches to monitoring, make the data relevant to a wider range of policies and exploit European satellite monitoring and other remotely sensed data.</p> | <p>Yes (a)</p> |
| <p>Maintain UK-wide monitoring programmes for seabird colonies.</p> | <p>Yes (a,c)</p> |
| <p>Improve seabed and pressure maps for all UK waters and for multiple uses (monitoring, assessment, planning, management, site protection), including developing classification necessary for monitoring and assessment.</p> | <p>Yes (a,c)</p> |

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| Undertake research and development of options on the monitoring of cetaceans, seabirds and benthic habitats, and with partner organisations for other biodiversity, in all UK waters, to meet all policy needs. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide advice and tools to support efficient data management, licensing and exchange practices to improve the availability of biodiversity data across the UK. | Yes (a) |
| Provide biodiversity data to meet European and global requirements. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide access to biodiversity data required by country biodiversity strategies | Yes (a) |
| Develop and apply advances in technology to improve the efficiency of access to biodiversity data. | Yes (a) |
| Develop analytical tools to support the use and interpretation of biodiversity data. | Yes (a) |
| Provide advice, co-ordination, and information to support joint approaches to the conservation of biodiversity across the countries of the UK, including advice on objectives and common standards, where it is necessary to do this at a UK level. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide advice to the UK Government, devolved administrations, country conservation bodies and others on the ecosystem approach to support sustainable management of natural resources, focusing on the value of goods and | Yes (a,b) |

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| services provided by the environment that contribute to human well-being | |
| Provide advice on approaches to the conservation of biodiversity for application in European and international contexts. | Yes (a,c) |
| Develop and publish UK biodiversity indicators | Yes (a,c) |
| Identify, prioritise and promote UK biodiversity research priorities. | Yes (a,c) |
| Provide advice on OSPAR, MSFD and Habitats Directive requirements. | Yes (a,c) |
| Undertake UK-wide ecosystem assessments and reporting (primarily to deliver reporting requirements for Habitats Directive and MSFD). | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Undertake assessment of offshore MPAs, including developing methodology to assess site condition and features (primarily to deliver offshore reporting responsibilities from the Marine and Coastal Access Act, support reporting requirements for Habitats Directive, and support management advice for offshore MPAs). | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Undertake research and development of new assessment methods and tools to enable assessment to become less costly and more effective. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide scientific support to enable effective UK implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), focusing on those MEAs that deliver the greatest nature conservation benefits, including advising on CITES permits and fulfilling UK reporting requirements | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide advice in support of the global conservation of biological diversity, paying particular attention to contributing to achievement of the Aichi targets for 2020 | Yes (a,b,c) |

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| Provide advice to UK Government departments, the governments of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies and others in respect of the implementation of Environment Charters, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and the UK Government strategy on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Overseas Territories | Yes (a,c) |
| Provide evidence, analysis and advice on the UK's impact on biodiversity overseas (e.g. through overseas investment, food, forestry, biofuels). | Yes (a) |
| Provide evidence and advice to assist the UK Government, devolved administrations and country conservation bodies in delivering global and national biodiversity targets in a European context. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Maintain an overview of emerging European activities and ensure the EU policy implications for, and impacts on, biodiversity and ecosystems are fully understood and properly considered as part of the UK Government's engagement with the EU institutions and decision-making processes. | Yes (a) |
| Provide a single point of contact on European issues, as they relate to nature conservation, for Defra, devolved administrations and other key JNCC stakeholders. | Yes (a) |
| Provide advice on the UK network of marine protected areas including advice to UK Government, devolved administrations and country conservation bodies on MPA matters in EU directives and international agreements and on UK-wide issues including the development of a UK MPA database and advice on reporting requirements under the Marine Acts. | Yes (a,c) |
| Identify areas that qualify as marine SPAs by 2015 (for inshore and joint offshore/inshore areas), refine boundaries for sites going forward, and provide associated advice and liaison with stakeholders. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Identify offshore SACs by the end of 2012, provide associated advice, and provide support for public consultation | Yes (a,b,c) |

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| and designation. | |
| Support the identification of offshore MCZs, complete Impact Assessment in consultation with stakeholders, and provide support for public consultation and future designations. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Identify nature conservation MPAs in offshore Scottish waters, in conjunction with SNH for inshore waters, and formally advise these to Scottish Government | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Gather and use site-level data and information to produce site conservation objectives and advice on operations for offshore MPAs. | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide advice on nature conservation interests to offshore industries and their regulators (oil and gas, renewables, aggregates and other marine licensing and planning consultations). | Yes (a,b,c) |
| Provide advice to the Marine Management Organisation and Marine Scotland to enable robust and comprehensive marine plans. | Yes (a,c) |
| Provide advice on fisheries to support MSFD implementation, management of MPAs, and more strategically in advising UK Government and devolved administrations. | Yes (a,c) |
| Provide advice on protected marine vertebrates, including fish and marine mammals, to help the UK fulfil its international obligations in a co-ordinated manner. | Yes (a,c) |